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NEAR EAST

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NORTH AFRICA

TRANSLATIONS ON NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
(FOUO 25/79)

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ISRAEL

ISRAELI ARAB INTELLIGENTSIA EXAMINED

Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM QUARTERLY in English Spring 79 pp 51-69

[Article by Elie Rekhess]

[Text] In the sixties the Arab intelligentsia in Israel were defined by a veteran analyst as 'a group of citizens who read books and newspapers, are aware of current economic and public affairs, and have economic, political and social demands'.[1] This was a rather inclusive definition - it embraced not only teachers, university and high school graduates and members of the liberal professions, but also *Knesset* members, mayors and heads of local councils, members of municipal and local councils, officials, *qādis* and priests - yet it reflected the social reality in which the Israeli Arabs found themselves after the establishment of the state. During the years preceding the War of Independence, and during the course of the war itself, a decisive majority of the local Arab intelligentsia had fled the country, leaving the remaining Arab population without its spiritual, cultural and political élite. Since then far-reaching changes have taken place in the structure and composition of Arab society in Israel. Today, a corresponding definition of the Arab intelligentsia in Israel, in terms of its self-perception, would be based primarily on the criterion of secondary and higher education and would include high school graduates, students, and graduates of institutions of higher learning.

In absolute terms, or compared to the Jewish population, the number of educated Arabs in Israel is still rather small. Nonetheless, since the establishment of the state their ranks have considerably, indeed impressively, expanded. The substantial growth in the numbers of educated Arabs in Israel is an outcome of

* E. Rekhess is the Director of Tel Aviv University's Shiloah Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies and head of the Israeli Arab Desk there.

[1] Michael Asaf, 'The Arab Intelligentsia in Israel' [Hebrew], *Amot*, June-July 1965, pp. 51-59.

the expansion, at all levels, of the school system in the Arab sector. The number of pupils attending secondary schools has increased from 3,115 in 1965 to approximately 20,000 in 1978. The number of pupils reaching the last year of high school rose from 258 in 1965 to 3,085 in 1976. The number of matriculants has increased accordingly, leading to a significant growth in the Arab student population. In 1966 there were 268 Arab students attending Israeli universities; in 1978 there were more than 2,000. In addition, about another 300 attend regional colleges and several hundred more are studying abroad, especially in Eastern bloc countries.

The increase in the number of students has led, in turn, to a growth in the number of Arab university graduates in Israel. Between the years 1961-1971, 328 Arabs and Druze received academic degrees from institutions of higher learning in Israel - the annual figure rising from six in 1961 to eighty two in 1971.[2] It has been estimated that at the end of the seventies the ranks of Arab and Druze graduates will increase by 250-350 annually. In 1978 there were about 2,000 Druze and Arab university graduates in Israel, and by the end of the decade there will be, accordingly, over 2,500 holding at least one university degree - in addition to many thousands of Arab and Druze students and high school graduates.[3]

Attractions of Education

The prospect of a liberal profession is drawing large numbers of Arab youths to Israeli universities. According to a study published in 1975[4] Arab high school pupils show a decided preference for higher education leading to entry into the liberal professions, as opposed to studies qualifying them for salaried posts. This is apparently the reason for the marked tendency among applicants to apply to the professional faculties (medicine, pharmacy, law, engineering). This tendency is especially conspicuous in the field of law; between the years 1961-71, seventeen per cent of all Arab graduates graduated from law faculties, as opposed to seven per cent of all Jewish graduates in 1970.[5] A survey conducted by the Hebrew University in Jerusalem indicated that in 1970 nearly one half of the Arab students would have liked to have transferred to the faculties of medicine or pharmacy.

The practice of one of the liberal professions raises the status of

[2] Elie Rekhess, 'Survey of Graduates of Institutions of Higher Learning in Israel from the Minority Groups (1961-71)' [Hebrew], *Surveys* 1 [Below, *Survey. 1961-71*], The Shiloah Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, 1973, pp. 6, 22.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

[4] Sâmi Mar'i, Avraham Benjamin, *The Attitude of Arab Society in Israel Towards Technical-vocational Education* [Hebrew], The Institute for Research and Development of Arab Education, School of Education, Haifa University, 1975

[5] Rekhess, *Survey, 1961-71*, p. 23.

the Arab graduate and gives him social prestige. Moreover, since the high demand for these professions in the Arab sector ensures quick absorption into the labour force, a liberal profession frees the Arab graduate from dependency on the government establishment and enables him to become economically independent within a relatively short period of time. The opportunities available to graduates of the humanities and social sciences, on the other hand, are more limited and are largely confined to the government bureaucracy.

Higher education and professional status are the bedrock of a new power base for Arab youth in Israel. The new stratum of educated Arabs which is coming to the fore draws its strength not only from traditional sources (such as family origins and prestige, or inherited economic power) but from individual achievements. Clear evidence of this emerges from a study conducted by Dr. Sâmi Mar'i. High school pupils and their parents were asked to rank six factors determining social status. The results were as follows:

Parents	*Pupils*
academic education	academic education
profession	profession
connections with the establishment	connections with the establishment
money	money
clan prestige	property
property	clan prestige

As can be seen, the attitudes of parents and children are strikingly similar. Both groups attribute greater importance to the achievement than to the ascriptive aspects of status. For both, academic education and profession are gradually replacing property and lineage as the major determinants of status.[6]

The growth in the number of Arab students also stems from the feeling widespread in Arab society that 'the key to success in the present time is the adoption of the scientific achievements of the West. Science is transformed into an article of faith and a magic formula for success.' An article on Arab academics in Israel, that appeared in the Arabic press, attributes the influx of Arab youth into the universities to 'the strong feeling among our youth and their parents that our generation is the generation of science, the generation of the scientific revolution, the generation of rational thought and of the total planning of life for the sake of progress'.[7] The author also restates the view, current in the Arab world after the 1967 war, that the shock of defeat induced growing numbers of Arab youths to choose scientific vocations. An examination of the fields of study of Arab youths in Israel confirms the existence of such a tendency. Of all the students graduating from the Hebrew University between the years 1961-71 only seven per cent

[6] Mar'i-Benjamin, *op. cit.*
[7] *Al-Ittihâd*, January 10, 1975.

graduated in the natural sciences, as opposed to thirty per cent of the Arab students in 1971.[8]

Problems of Education

An Arab high school graduate entering university must overcome many difficulties, not the least of which is the problem of language. Many students complain that their limited mastery of English and Hebrew handicaps them in their studies: it makes it difficult for them to understand lectures, read professional literature, and express themselves orally and in writing. Difficulties in adjustment also stem from the teaching methods prevalent in the Arab sector, as pointed out by Dr. Butrus Abû Mana of Haifa University: 'In Arab society the child is not permitted to argue, disagree or criticize a source of authority. The method of education in the Arab high school... is based not on analysis, but on rote learning. The written word is sacrosanct. This is a legacy from many generations and much time will pass before we rid ourselves of it. In the university, on the other hand, the student is expected from his first day to challenge, disagree, and analyze.'[9]

Another source of the Arab student's frustration is the lack of suitable counselling at the stage of registration and course selection. In a study of Arab university graduates it was found that only a small minority had access to reliable up-to-date information when making their applications. Many received no advice or counselling whatsoever, while others relied on the guidance of friends, acquaintances and parents.[10] As a result, Arab students were over-represented in the faculties of the humanities, law, medicine and pharmacy, and under-represented in the faculties of social sciences, natural sciences and engineering - as opposed to a more symmetrical distribution of Jewish students between the humanities, the social sciences and the exact sciences. There is also a heavy concentration of Arab students in the departments of Middle East history and of Arabic language and literature. The Arab student assumes that he will have an advantage over others in these fields, but after commencing their studies many are disappointed and want to switch to a different department. In a survey of university graduates it was found that every fifth Arab student had changed his chosen field of study at least once in the course of his university career. As a result of the lack of appropriate counselling many Arabs graduate in fields for which there is no demand on the labour market. The consequences of this are quite serious.[11]

The problem of occupational integration is, in fact, a central theme in the complaints of the Arab intelligentsia against

[8] Rekhess, *Survey, 1961-71.*
[9] Interview in *The Herald Tribune*, May 25, 1972.
[10] Rekhess, *Survey, 1961-71*, p. 9.
[11] *Ibid.*

government policy, it being frequently asserted that the channels of integration into the Israeli economy are barred to the young educated Arab. On the one hand, the economic infrastructure of the Arab sector has not yet developed sufficiently to absorb all the thousands of educated Arabs seeking employment: the level of industrialization of the Arab private sector is low and its economic resources rather limited. On the other hand, the Jewish private sector which offers a wide range of employment opportunities, is for the most part not open to Arab graduates, who are often rejected on security grounds.

The limited employment opportunities available in the private sector and restricted possibilities in the government and public sector leave one major channel for Arab graduates of the humanities and social sciences: teaching.[12] The percentage of graduates absorbed in the educational system is, in fact, considerable, and while this undoubtedly contributes to a higher standard of teaching in the schools, it also contributes to the frustration of the graduate working in a profession which is not always the most fitting for his talents and education.

Many Arab graduates see employment by the government bureaucracy, other than teaching, as a challenge and a symbol of equality and integration. The actual situation, however, is fairly disheartening. The government of Israel, faced by the rapid increase in the numbers of Arab university graduates, has on more than one occasion taken up the problem of the employment of Arabs with higher education, and has adopted measures to relieve their distress. In May 1976 it was decided to establish a unit for occupational counselling and guidance in the Arab sector.[13] This unit was intended to encourage Arab high school pupils to enter vocational courses, to provide counselling for high school graduates intending to continue their education, guiding them in light of their aptitudes and the state of the labour market, and to deal with the employment problems of Arab university graduates. Attempts have also been made by the Prime Minister's Office to absorb qualified Arab graduates in the civil service. Thus, for example, at the end of 1977 the Ministry of Education decided to take on thirty two Arabs in supervisory and advisory posts, in the preparation of school curricula, and in the prevention of early school leaving.[14] It transpired, however, that the success of the government's policy depends not only on the budgetary slotting of positions, but even more so on the receptiveness to the policy at the level where hiring decisions are actually made. A lack of openness among the Jewish public frequently stems from prejudices regarding Arab competence, from ideological opposition to the

[12] See Rachel Peleg, Avraham Benjamin, *Higher Education and the Arabs in Israel* [Hebrew]. Tel Aviv, 1977, pp. 82-83.

[13] The proposal was included in the recommendations attached to the survey of graduates of institutions of higher education, *Survey, 1961-1971*.

[14] *Al-Anbā'*, November 3, 1977.

employment of Arabs in senior posts in the Jewish economy, from the mistaken notion that the establishment is not interested in encouraging the employment of Arabs, and from the fear of frictions of a national nature at work.

Jewish high school and university graduates are also confronted by problems resulting from the lack of suitable guidance, of incompatibility between field of study and actual employment, difficulties in finding employment, frustration, and the like. However, in the Arab sector these problems take on an added edge, frequently one with a distinctly national colouring.

Many Arab students come from village backgrounds. The sharp transition from the closed rural environment with its conservative and traditional patterns of life to a large modern city is often accompanied by a severe value crisis. In most cases, despite the expectation that the campus could serve as a fertile meeting ground for the cultivation of friendly relations and mutual understanding, integration between the Arab and Jewish students is not effected. In many cases, the involvement of Arab students in nationalist political activity contributes to their alienation from the Jewish student body.[15] Neither does withdrawal of the Arab students from the general student body into separate frameworks of their own, as is the case on all campuses, help lower the barriers. The Israel-Arab conflict has a pronounced effect on the relations between Jewish and Arab students. In times of political tension, stresses on the campus build up and are sometimes released in acrimonious verbal exchanges or violent clashes between extremists on both sides. This occurred at the end of 1975 when Arab students at the Hebrew University refused to do guard duty at the students' residences. An administrative order obliging them to do so triggered a far-ranging debate in which Arab and Jewish students truculently advanced national and ideological arguments. The Arab students committee argued that as long as the right of self determination was withheld from the Palestinian people, Arab students could not be obliged to do guard duty, which, in their view, was part of the state's security system.[16]

Another conflict broke out at the beginning of 1978 at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem campus when Jewish students attempted to prevent the Arab students committee from organizing a demonstration against President Sadat's peace initiative. A similar confrontation took place at Haifa University in March 1978, when Jewish students prevented Arab students from holding a conference on the situation of the Israeli Arab on the grounds that 'this is an Israeli university and not a *Fath* training camp'.[17]

The housing problem weighing on the Arab student well illustrates the complexity of the social integration between Jews

[15] See Peleg-Benjamin, *Higher Education and the Arabs in Israel*, pp. 91-92.
[16] Leaflet published by the Committee, November 29, 1975.
[17] *Ha-Aretz*, March 30, 1978.

and Arabs in Israel. That Jewish families refuse to rent them rooms is a complaint frequently voiced by Arab students, and cases of promises and contracts broken upon discovery of the prospective lodger's Arab identity are not uncommon. Despite the efforts of the university authorities and students unions to solve the housing problems of Arab students in the framework of the university residences or outside the campus, the pressures remain great and the same difficulties crop up every year anew (especially in the Tel Aviv area).

Yet another crisis faces the Arab graduate with the completion of his studies and his return to his native village or town. There, the graduate must somehow bridge the gap between the values of the Westernized society to which he was exposed in the Jewish city and the traditional values of his town or village. Conflicts arise with parents who expect their son to bear his share of family burdens, as he had done before he departed for his studies. One of the characteristics of the Arab intelligentsia is its youth, and the age gap between it and the parent generation is yet another factor leading to the isolation of the Arab intellectual in the society of his origin.[18] The gap between the rural-conservative and modern urban ways of life, the inter-generational ideological conflicts, employment problems, lack of social and cultural facilities at the appropriate level, difficulties in finding a mate with a suitable educational background - all these compel a considerable number of Arab graduates from rural backgrounds to leave their original environment and settle in urban areas.

Patterns of Political Involvement

The Arab intelligentsia is permeated with a sense of mission and social responsibility. Their being university graduates and students has led them to an elitist self-perception and they see themselves as the standard bearers of progress and change. They feel a personal commitment towards the society which grants them special status and expects them to act for its advancement. Thus, for example, the well-known poet Sâlim Jubrân speaks of 'the right of the people to expect the intelligentsia to constitute a powerful and valuable force which will take up its position in the front lines of the march towards progress'.[19] This perception of the mission of the intelligentsia (*risâlat al-muthaqqafîn*), typical of the developing states in the third world, is widespread in the Arab world. Underlying it is the view that the duty of the intellectual is to work for the advancement and renewal of society, to liberate it from outmoded patterns, to fight for social justice, improve human relations, foster brotherhood and solidarity, raise moral standards by personal example, cultivate cultural values, contribute to scien-

[18] See, Peleg-Benjamin, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-110.
[19] *Al-Ittiḥâd*, July 19, 1974.

tific education and provide the people with intellectual leadership.[20]

The question is, to what degree the normative belief in the mission of the intelligentsia is translated into effective action. Arab academics were asked to relate to this question in the framework of the survey of Arab graduates conducted in 1971, and the apologetic tone of their answers was an indication of their uneasiness about the gap between word and deed. Many excused their lack of activity on the grounds that channels of action were barred to them. They placed responsibility for this on others, blaming those who 'paid too much attention to the elders and *shaikhs* and members of the previous generation, pushing the young people aside'. Their criticism was also directed against the government officials dealing with the Arab sector, who were deliberately attempting, in their opinion, to perpetuate the hegemony of the older generation and preserve the status of the elders in the political, economic and social structure: 'The government finds the rule of the old men convenient. It wants the flattering image of a young intelligentsia only for external consumption.'[21]

Since this survey was conducted there appears to have been a major change in the attitudes of the intelligentsia towards the question of their involvement in Arab society in Israel. We are now witnessing the emergence of an activist political movement in which the intelligentsia plays a central role. Its representatives have become one of the principal forces contending for power in the internal struggle for the future leadership of the Arabs in Israel. On the village level the change is reflected in the rising proportion of the young and educated assuming positions of local leadership. The struggle to take over positions of influence in the villages is not an easy one, since the intelligentsia has to fight the adhesiveness of traditional and conservative elements which draw their strength from a wide network of personal and clan loyalties. Nevertheless, some of the intelligentsia have succeeded in upsetting the traditional structure of their villages and in making a breach in the old order. The most important foci of influence through which the intelligentsia are attempting to consolidate their position in the villages are the institutions of local government. The elections to local councils, in which this stratum of Arab society can compete with other forces in a free and democratic way, has enabled them to increase their representation on the councils.

According to data published by the Ministry of the Interior, the percentage of the young participating in election campaigns in the villages has grown steadily. This is evident in the age structure of

[20] On intellectuals in Samaria see: Shimon Shamir, Rina Shapira, Shira Tivon, Israel Shtokman, Elie Rekhess, 'The Professional Elite in Samaria' [Hebrew], *Surveys*, Shiloah Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, 1975, pp. 205-206.

[21] Rekhess, *Survey, 1961-71*, p. 157.

the candidates elected to local governing bodies: in 1973, 23 per cent of the candidates were 40 or under, while 9 per cent of those elected were 30 or under, and about 33 per cent were 40 or under.[22]

The recent change in the law governing municipal elections, by which the mayor or head of the local council is elected on a personal basis, has increased the chances of the intelligentsia to consolidate its power, as was demonstrated in the elections held in November 1978. At the same time, we should be careful not to exaggerate the significance of the change taking place in the alignment of forces in the villages. The intelligentsia is still dependent on fractional forces within the Arab village, and the success of their efforts to assume leading roles in municipal activities depends on assistance from the heads of family alignments and on the power of the clan coalitions. While the system of personal loyalties and structure of traditional institutions have undoubtedly been shaken, these frameworks are still far from breaking down.

In this context, the role played by intellectuals of village origin in the consolidation of the National Committee of Arab Heads of Local Councils should be pointed out. This body, set up in 1974 with the aim of advancing the municipal interests of the Arab sector, has of late increased greatly in influence and prestige. The involvement of members of the Committee in the events leading to 'Land Day' (March 30, 1976) greatly enhanced its importance. There can be no doubt that the participation of intellectuals such as Aḥmad Masâlaḥa of Dabbûriyya, Jamâl Tarâbiyya of Sakhnîn, and Jalâl Abû Tu'ma of Baq'a al-Gharbiyya changed the character of the Committee and contributed towards its consolidation as a representative body fighting for the rights of Israeli Arabs in every sphere, including the national.[23]

The political involvement of the intelligentsia in rural districts does not reflect group activity, but is the outcome of individual initiative on the part of a few key figures who succeeded in putting together local coalitions. In the towns and on the national level patterns of activity of a different sort have emerged. Ever since the Six Day War, and with added impetus after the Yom Kippur War, the Arab intelligentsia has been establishing in various parts of the country independent frameworks of action unrelated to the institutionalized party organizations. These bodies arose in order to advance the common struggle of various interest groups within the Arab intelligentsia: in 1971 the National Union of Arab University Graduates was founded; in the same year a committee of Nazareth-born university graduates was formed (similar

[22] 'Elections to the Local Authorities in the Arab Sector - 1973' [Hebrew], Ministry of the Interior, Local Government Section, Minorities Department, Jerusalem, March 1974, p. 8.

[23] On this involvement see Elie Rekhess, 'The Arabs of Israel and Land Expropriation in the Galilee: Background, Events, and Implications' [Hebrew], *Occasional Papers*, Shiloah Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, 1977.

committees have also been formed in other places); every institution of higher learning has an Arab Students Committee, all of which are united in a National Committee founded in 1975; in 1974 a National Committee of Arab High School Pupils was founded in Nazareth.

The initiative for the founding of the National Union of Arab University Graduates came in 1971 from radical circles, which included the lawyer Muḥammad Miâ'ri, formerly of the nationalist *al-Ard* movement; Dr. Muḥammad Ḥajj Muḥammad, one of the heads of the Socialist List which stood for the Sixth *Knesset*; Dr. Emile Tûma, a leading figure in the *Rakaḥ* (The Hebrew-language acronym of New Communist List, the Israeli Communist Party), and the lawyer Abd al-Ḥâfiz Darâwisha, a *Rakaḥ* activist from Nazareth. The declared objectives of this body were to act for the cultural and social betterment of the Israeli Arabs; to improve the standards of education in Arab schools at every level, and to eradicate illiteracy among the Arab population; to encourage secondary and university education; to press for the education of Arab girls, and to liberate the Arab woman from the chains of the past in order to obtain social equality; and to act for the protection of the rights and claims of Israel's Arab citizens in all cultural, social and economic spheres.

It was not by chance that their platform concentrated on social rather than political issues. Indeed, the organizers stressed that the Union had 'no organizational or ideological ties to any political party or organization whatsoever; it would accept university graduates and students without any reference to party affiliation or ideological outlook'. This approach apparently stemmed from the assumption that open political involvement might lead to a harsh reaction on the part of the authorities, even to the outlawing of the organization.

The Union of Arab University Graduates was a short-lived affair that did not succeed in establishing itself. The reasons for its failure seem to be related to the difficulties encountered in creating a nationwide organizational structure that could embrace individuals of different backgrounds, outlooks and regions. The organizers apparently came to the conclusion that the time had not yet arrived in which diverse groups within the academic population could unite in the service of common goals. It appears that the activist circles among the intelligentsia learned the lesson of the Union's failure, namely that organizations on a local basis had a greater chance of success.

This view was reflected in the activities of the Committee of Nazareth University Graduates. This group of free professionals, including Dr. Rashîd Salim, Dr. Anîs Kardûsh, the engineer Bishâra Mu'ammar, lawyer Walîd Fâhûm, Dr. Bâsim Tûma, and lawyers Kamâl Dâhir and Ra'iq Jarjûra, began to take form at the beginning of 1971, 'out of a feeling of responsibility towards the

people', and a feeling of solidarity which stemmed, according to them, from 'the exalted goals imposed upon us by our nationality and our social status'.[24] The group's sense of its own potential power, a feeling which intensified as its membership expanded, induced the founders to take steps to oust the existing municipal leadership and to find solutions to burning problems in the fields of education, sanitation and transport. The Nazareth university graduates searched for channels of activity which would grant them leverage in the running of the town. Like their counterparts in the villages, they too understood that the way to implement their goals was through the institutions of local government. However, in contrast to the situation in the villages, clan and family interests here played a minor role.

The Nazareth activists stressed the non-party character of their organization and their willingness to establish a 'front with any party that will undertake to act on behalf of an agreed programme to develop the town and its services'. After failing to reach an agreement with the representatives of the Labour Alignment, they decided to join forces with the Communist Party: it was thus that the Democratic Front came into being, uniting under one roof the Nazareth graduates, representatives of the local branch of the Communist Party, representatives of the local Chamber of Commerce, students and other 'loyal elements in the town'.[25] The entry of the academics into the election campaign as a united body together with the Communists weighed the scales in their favour and gave the majority on the local council and the mayorship to the Democratic Front. The academics obtained an impressive victory: four of their representatives were elected as members of the municipal council (consisting of seventeen members) and two of them were appointed deputy mayors. This representation reflects the growing power of the intelligentsia and the importance attributed to them by other forces in the political arena - first and foremost by the Communist Party.

Nazareth also served as a focus for the organization of Arab high school pupils. In April 1974, after the groundwork of setting up a network of local branches in high schools throughout the Galilee area had been completed, a National Committee of High School Pupils was founded in Nazareth. Once established, this committee began cooperating with the Arab students committees and adopted similar patterns of activity.

Although the Arab students in institutions of higher learning in Israel insist on their right to organize themselves in independent frameworks, separate from the general Students Union, their organizations are not recognized by the university authorities. The Arab students argue that they are confronted by special problems which cannot be solved by the general Students Union. The

[24] *Al-Ittihad*, January 12, 1971; January 23, 1973.
[25] *Ibid.*, January 24, 1975.

expansion of the network of universities in Israel has led to an increase in the number of Arab students committees, and they are today found on every campus. The oldest is the committee at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, founded at the end of the fifties.

The students committees act to relieve the distresses and difficulties of the Arab students on their campuses. Thus, for example, the Tel Aviv University committee initiated a public campaign with the aim of ensuring accommodation for Arab students in the University residences and improving the standard of the off-campus apartments rented on their behalf. They also appealed to public opinion against the behaviour of the police who took Arab students into custody for interrogation at unreasonable hours, in their view for no reason whatsoever. In Jerusalem they organized against the obligation of doing guard duty at the students residences in Jerusalem; protested against the discrimination which they claim exists against Arab candidates in various faculties such as medicine, engineering, and geography; and took action against attempts to restrict their social activities on campus. Considerable attention is paid by the students committees to social and cultural activities. Recently a number of evenings of Palestinian folklore have been organized, an activity reflecting the emphasis placed on the national issue. Events of this nature are not infrequently transformed into political platforms and provide a pretext for acrimonious debates between Jewish and Arab students. The Arab students committees also bring out single editions of newspapers (for fear that regular publication would not be permitted by the authorities) such as *al-Sabbâr* in Haifa, *al-Shaykh Mu'anis* in Tel Aviv, *al-Jarmaq*, *Jamâhir al-Ṭalī'a* and *Ra'y al-Talī'a* in Jerusalem.

In the summer of 1975 the Union of Students Committees set up a loan and grant fund for Arab students, and in a short time collected a quarter of a million Israeli pounds from the villages. Student activists visit Arab schools, lecture on university life, and recommend tried and tested methods of getting accepted (such as taking aptitude tests in Arabic, choosing departments which do not demand entrance examinations, etc.). In Jerusalem the students have also set up an office to provide new candidates with advice and guidance.

Another field in which the intelligentsia are active is in organizing protests against all manifestations of discrimination and injustice stemming, in their opinion, from government policy *vis-à-vis* the Arab minority. These activities take the form of organizing demonstrations, distributing leaflets and manifestos, and composing protest letters. The involvement of the intelligentsia was particularly conspicuous in the land expropriations controversy in the Galilee at the beginning of 1976. The National Committee of Arab High School Pupils vigorously denounced the 'Judaization of the Galilee', while the Arab student committees

embarked on a militant campaign against the implementation of the programme.

The organizations of the intelligentsia also show a high degree of involvement in problems of a distinctly national character and in questions concerning the fate of the Palestinian people. Although the platforms of these organizations do not refer to political activity as an end in itself, they do contain vague and equivocal formulations such as: 'concern for human issues in the Arab sector', or 'the committee will participate in all forms of the struggle of the Arab nation in this country, in view of the common fate and single goal of all the members of our nation'.[26] These formulations are intended to stress the role the intelligentsia is duty bound to play, not only in the struggle to ensure its own specific rights, but also in the national-political struggle of the Palestinian people in general and of the Israeli Arab in particular.

Ideological Shifts

Political developments in the area since 1967 have led broad sections of the Arab intelligentsia to reformulate their positions on the basic issues of their national existence and political future in Israel. The range of attitudes includes a radical pole around which rally a number of small groups not organized in any party framework. Some of them apparently operate clandestinely. These groupings show strong identification with the various Palestinian organizations.

At the end of 1974, during the period in which the prestige of the PLO rose to unprecedented heights as a result of the Rabat resolutions and Arafat's appearance in the UN, a number of Arab students in Israel publicly identified with the PLO. Thus, for example, one student said: 'After decades of frustration and inferiority a Palestinian body has arisen, called the PLO, as the organization representing the Palestinian people. I don't say that I myself hold to the ideology of the PLO and I am not necessarily a disciple of Arafat or any other leader. The main thing is that a recognized representative body with which we can identify has at long last arisen, one which gives substance to the Palestinian entity and proposes a solution to the conflict.[27]

Some of those who identified emotionally with the Palestinian organizations even responded to outside incitement encouraging Israeli Arabs to join the ranks of the terrorists. A good many of these were from the intelligentsia. Thus, for example, in 1968 the chairman of the Arab students committee in Jerusalem was convicted of giving shelter to a member of the *Fath*; among those who planned and executed the explosion in the Hebrew University campus cafeteria in 1969 were students studying at that

[26] Manifesto of Arab Students Committees in Israel, 1975.
[27] *Ma'ariv*, December 27, 1974.

institution; in 1971 the Nazareth lawyer Dahâmisha was arrested on the charge of organizing a terrorist network; in 1972 a student at the Technion was sentenced to four years imprisonment for belonging to the *Fath* and planning to blow up the students' club at the Technion; among the members of the Jewish-Arab spy and terror ring exposed at the end of 1972 were Arab teachers, students and high school graduates. These facts, however, should be seen in a wider context in which a sense of proportion is preserved. Considering the range of possible actions and the reservoir of potential recruits, the extent of hostile activities is very much that of a marginal phenomenon. Nevertheless, their higher degree of political awareness and national consciousness does impel a relatively higher proportion of Arab intellectuals, as opposed to other sectors of the Arab public in Israel, to participate in hostile activity.

Since 1976 a group of radical students in Jerusalem, whose members support the 'rejection front', has been attracting public attention. A political manifesto published by this group during the elections to the Arab students committee in Jerusalem at the end of 1977 clearly demonstrates the extent of erosion which has taken place in their attitudes towards the state. The manifesto stated, *inter alia*:

(1) The right of self-determination of the Palestinian people applies not only to the population concentrated in the West Bank, Gaza, and the Arab world, but also to the Israeli Arabs, referred to as 'the masses of the Galilee and the Triangle'.
(2) The PLO is the sole legal representative of the Palestinian Arab people and must be seen as a 'unifying framework for all the units of the Palestinian revolution including the rejectionist front'.
(3) Support should be given to the idea of setting up a 'national authority' in all parts of Palestinian land as an interim solution, without peace, recognition or negotiations.
(4) UN resolutions 242 and 338, the renewal of the Geneva Convention, and the Sadat peace initiative should all be rejected.
(5) The right of the refugees to repatriation should be supported by means of a vigorous and prolonged struggle against those who uprooted them.[28]

The nationalist activities of this radical Jerusalem group also included an attempt to strengthen ties with students in Arab universities on the West Bank for a joint political struggle. The students committee supported and identified with the struggle of the students at Bir Zayt University against the military government and the college authorities, and also published a leaflet protesting

[28] See Manifesto of Jerusalem Arab Students Committee, December 6, 1977, and also, *al-Fajr*, December 17, 1977.

against the attitude of the military government towards the students at Bethlehem University.

The demand that the right of the Arabs of Israel to self-determination be recognized constitutes a serious turning point in the Arab attitude towards the state: the line between this demand and the presentation of irredentist demands is perilously thin. This demand represents a basic change in the traditional attitude of the vast majority of Israeli Arabs, moderates and radicals alike, who until now have seen their fate as connected with the future of the State of Israel and have rejected separatist notions. At the beginning of 1978 it became clear that the idea of the Arabs of Israel being entitled to self-determination was not held only by members of the Jerusalem students committee. A similar demand, though more moderate, was put forward by 56 Arab intellectuals and members of the liberal professions in the Galilee. The manifesto they published expressed the signatories' support for the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel (a principle rejected by the more radical circles), but at the same time argued that as they were an integral part of the Palestinian people 'any solution to the Palestinian problem must include official recognition and international guarantees of the national identity of the Palestinians residing in Israel, of their right to stay in their motherland, and to retrieve their lands, their villages, their property, and the estates of the *Waqf* which were confiscated'.[29] The list of signatories represented a broad spectrum of the Arab intelligentsia. Among them were the lawyer Muḥammad Tawfīq Qaywân from Umm-al-Faḥm, a leading member of the *Abnā' al-Balad* or 'Sons of the Village' movement, which has become well known for its radical positions and political activism, while other signatories have in the past been regarded as holding relatively moderate views.

The Arab intellectuals in the Communist Party do not share the views of the signatories of the Manifesto of the 56 or of the political platform of the radical students. In fact, the activities of the radicals have sharply challenged the Communists, who have always been careful to present themselves as a political party with a legitimate programme working strictly within the framework of the law. In the opinion of the radical groupings, the adherence of the Communist Party to UN resolutions 242 and 338 restricts its freedom of manoeuvre and narrows its bargaining position by closing off other more desirable options (such as the return to the Partition Plan of 1947). The Communist Party supporters, on the other hand, accuse the radicals of 'rigidity that bellows all or nothing'. In the opinion of Sâlim Jubrân of the Communist Party, they are 'nervous, narrow-minded separationists who lay claim to a monopoly of patriotism and loyalty to the revolution'. Instead of 'unrealistic maximalist slogans' Jubrân suggests working quietly

[29] *Al-Fajr*, February 25, 1978.

and consistently for 'the attainment of everything that can be attained - however small - without giving up the ultimate goals'.[30]

The tension existing between student supporters of the Communist Party and the more radical student circles came to the fore in January 1976, when the UN Security Council was debating the Palestinian problem in the presence of a PLO observer. The dispute erupted over a telegram of protest which the Jerusalem students committee wanted to send to the General Secretary of the UN. The Communist Party supporters on the committee proposed a moderate formulation in line with the official Party position, referring to the right of the Palestinians to set up an independent state alongside the State of Israel. The radicals vigorously opposed this formulation which, in their opinion, implied recognition of the State of Israel. The two camps failed to reach an agreement and the telegram was not sent.

The tension between the two groups reached a climax in the summer of 1976, following the expulsion of the Communist Party supporters from the Jerusalem Arab students committee. The official reason given for disbanding the committee was that its members had displayed a compromising and defeatist attitude on the question of guard duty for Arabs on the Jerusalem campus, and that they had 'surrendered to pressure from the authorities'. The expulsion led to denunciations in the Communist press, which attacked 'schismatic nationalistic groups trying to traffic in the slogans of extreme nationalism for which the Palestinian people have already paid a heavy price in the form of a long-lasting tragedy'. The editorial in *al-Ittiḥād*, the Communist Party organ, harshly criticized the 'remnants of Trotskyism, Maoism, *Matzpen* and left-wing extremism, which are actually serving the interests of the Israeli regime, which would like to bring back the days of Aḥmad Shuqayri and Aḥmad Sa'id'.[31] In the 1977 elections to the Jerusalem Arab students committee the Communists did not succeed in retrieving their hegemony, and were, in fact, pushed to the sidelines. In defence of their position they have repeatedly argued that the extremism of the radicals is self-defeating, since it makes it easier for the *Likud* government to 'launch its attacks on the Arab students',[32] and obstructs Arab-Jewish cooperation on the campuses. The continuous attempts by the Communists to regain control of the Jerusalem students committee met with success in the 1978 elections when the *Rakaḥ*-sponsored Front list gained the majority. This success was not repeated in Haifa, where *Rakaḥ* supporters lost the elections.

The vociferous activities of the radicals and Communist Party

[30] *Zo ha-Derekh*, January 28, 1976.

[31] *Al-Ittiḥād*, June 22, 1976. The names of Aḥmad Shuqayri, first head of the PLO and Aḥmad Sa'id, commentator on the Egyptian 'Voice of the Arabs' radio station, were both identified before 1967 with the slogan proposing that Israel be driven into the sea.

[32] *Ibid.*, January 24, 1978.

supporters sometimes create the misleading impression that they represent the whole of the Arab intelligentsia in Israel. While it is true that a radical style has become a common identifying feature among Arab university students, it is often no more than a natural expression of youthful exuberance. In many cases it is a passing phase that extends no further than the university days themselves. The Arab student, who begins his university studies at an early age, finds on the campus almost unlimited scope for free and unrestricted political activity: it is no accident that the campus is called *ḥaram*, i.e., a 'prohibited area' in which the students are protected from the reprisals by the state authorities. When his studies are over, however, the graduate returns home where he is once more forced with a restraining and sobering reality. The process of growing up and settling down, the need to establish himself economically and socially and his responsibilities to his family in many cases all lead to the renunciation of radicalism and to the adoption of a more balanced and moderate world view.

It should also be pointed out that alongside the radical camp is a solid body of moderate Arab academics and professionals who have adopted a positive Arab identity which, in their opinion, does not conflict with their identification with Israel. They choose to emphasize their acceptance of the situation and to express their loyalty as citizens of the state. This approach is formulated in the platform of the Study Circle for Change and Co-existence, which was founded by members of the younger generation and the intelligentsia close to the Labour Party in the summer of 1975. This group, which according to its founders comprises some 1,200 members in 58 towns and villages, has defined itself as a 'nucleus of moderate socialist opinion, sharing the values of the Labour Party except for those values which are not binding on the Arab citizen, such as Zionism'. The primary aim of the group is 'discussion and educational and intellectual activity about all matters relating to the integration of the Israeli Arab into the social and economic system of the State of Israel'.[33] Nonetheless, the nationalist revival among Israeli Arabs has not left the moderate camp untouched. Harshly criticized and accused of 'questionable loyalty to the nation', they have been obliged to adopt an image of national pride and to add their voices to the swelling tide of Arab nationalism. The representatives of the moderate wing of the Arab intelligentsia appear to have come to the conclusion that in the race for the leadership of the Arabs of Israel, an image of national self-assertion is essential, and that it is the only way to compete successfully with the extremists.

Conclusion

The change which has taken place in the patterns of activity of the Arab intelligentsia in Israel since 1967 and the erosion in their

[33] *Ha-Aretz*, May 19, 1975, and the platform of the circle.

political attitudes are the outcome of two parallel yet interrelated processes: the strengthening of the Palestinian element of their national identity on the one hand, and the inner dynamics of the development of Arab society in Israel on the other.

As a result of their close contact with Jewish society, the Arabs of Israel have been exposed to a process of rapid modernization, which has manifested itself in the gradual breakdown of traditional structures and institutions. The older social and political leadership has been replaced by an educated generation representing a stratum of young Arabs possessed of a strong sense of social mission and national pride. This stratum harbours accumulated feelings of neglect, deprivation and discrimination, their bitterness and frustration being the result of difficulties encountered in integrating into the Israeli social and economic system. Moreover, caught between the conflicting influences of a conservative traditional culture and those of a modern Western culture, they are also in the throes of a severe crisis of values.

The close acquaintance of the Arab intelligentsia, especially the university students, with Jewish society has led to a steep rise in their level of expectations, both collectively and as individuals. The development and level of achievement of the Jewish population are the only criterion by which they are prepared to judge the situation of the Arab minority. The awareness of a considerable social and economic gap between the two sectors only deepens their sense of estrangement. The differences between the sectors are perceived as the outcome of unsuccessful and discriminatory government policies, which ignore the urgent needs of the Arab population. The impressive advances made by the Arab sector since the establishment of the state: the transformation of a backward rural society into a progressive society with a flourishing agriculture; the development of a comprehensive educational system; the creation of an infrastructure of modern services in rural districts and the rapid economic growth which has led to a general rise in living standards - all this is taken for granted and earns little appreciation.

On the other hand, the last two wars between Israel and the Arab states have had far-reaching effects on the national consciousness of the Arab intelligentsia of Israel. The encounter with the Arabs of the administered areas after the Six Day War exacerbated the problem of national identity for Israeli Arabs and strengthened its Arab-Palestinian component. The contact between the two communities reinforced feelings of solidarity and unity and impelled many to re-examine the content of their Arab nationality. After the October War of 1973 this process was greatly intensified due to the strengthened status of the PLO and the rise in the prestige of the Arab world. The feeling among the Arabs that Israel had been weakened at home and abroad and lacked a powerful and confident leadership, the unrest on the West Bank in the wake

of the Rabat resolutions - all these imbued the Arab intelligentsia with a sense of self-confidence, and encouraged their leaders to refuse to accept the status quo and to embark on a struggle for the realization of their rights.

It was this reassessment of the situation which gave birth to a consciousness among the intelligentsia that conditions were ripe for the setting up of independent frameworks within which the struggle could be conducted by legal means. This development indirectly reflects one of the most significant aspects of the process of change in Arab society in Israel: the gradual replacement of frameworks based on local-family loyalties by frameworks of national allegiance. The committees of high school pupils, students and graduates were founded to deal with the specific problems of the various groups concerned, but at the same time they also serve as an organizational infrastructure for national political activity. The dividing line between a struggle for the realization of civil rights and a struggle for national rights is often blurred.

The stratum of the Arab intelligentsia is continuing to expand at a rapid rate and in the future is bound to grow in importance and become a powerful and influential force in the political and social life of the Arabs of Israel. The lack of adequate solutions to the personal and collective problems of this stratum of the population will almost certainly lead to an intensification of hostility and bitterness among its members, and consequently to an increased tendency towards polarization and alienation, together with a further erosion in their attitudes towards the state.

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ISRAEL

INTEREST GROUPS IN ISRAEL

Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM QUARTERLY in English Spring 79 pp 128-144

[Article by Yael Yishai]

[Text] When a group of Israelis was asked which of them was a member of an interest group only a few raised their hands. The majority, which belonged to the General Federation of Labour (Histadrut), did not think of themselves as a 'group'. The minority, which belonged to other unions, did not want to identify themselves in public with an 'interest'. The word 'interest' does not have a positive connotation in Israel's political life. The word 'pressure', although it expresses a common daily activity, is well nigh tabu, and 'self-interest' is a pejorative term. We shall examine here the background against which these attitudes developed.

Interest groups in democratic societies play an essential role in bringing the citizens' needs to the attention of the authorities. Although there is no consensus as to how much these groups influence public policy, the absence of active interest groups is generally taken as a sure sign that the system in question is not functioning as a 'healthy' democracy. The absence of voluntary public organizations testifies to a blurring of the boundaries between state and society and a lack of communication between the people and the government. Interest groups not only assist in bolstering democracy, they are a result of democracy. To a certain extent they are also an affirmation of its presence, since they constitute a focus for citizens' participation in government *on condition* that there is a clear dividing line between the interest and the foci of power - the government, the parliament and the political parties.

* Yael Yishai is a lecturer in the Department of Political Science, Haifa University. Her fields of interest are parties, interest groups and policy. She has published a book, *Factionalism in the Labour Movement* (Hebrew), and is author of some dozen articles on related topics.

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Although Israel belongs to the family of democratic states, the question of interest groups nevertheless poses a problem. This problem stems from four aspects of the Israeli political system which distinguish it from other democracies:

(1) Israel is a *centralist* state; there is a high concentration of power and authority in the hands of the government. Many areas of social and economic activity are dependent on government support. The government is the largest employer and consumer, it owns a considerable percentage of the country's land, its airlines, shipping lines, and railroad and telephone networks. Until recently, it was impossible to import an electrical appliance for domestic use in Israel without obtaining an import licence from the government. Although the change in administration has brought a partial reduction of government involvement in daily life (expressed, among other things, in the liberalization of foreign currency controls and the abolition of the need for import licences) the tendency prevails.

(2) Israel is a *'party-state'*, i.e., a state in which political parties play a decisive role in shaping political and social life. Although striking changes have taken place in this area since Benjamin Akzin wrote about it in 1955,[1] and the role of the parties in education, employment, etc., has been greatly reduced, there are still many fields which are dominated by the parties, including the broadcasting system (which is state owned), health services, agricultural settlement and the distribution of land.

(3) There is a *public consensus*. Despite an enormous growth in the population and socio-economic diversification, Israel has preserved, to a great, although diminishing, extent, an 'operative consensus'. Thus, despite religious, ethnic and economic divisions, it has been able to build a stable political society. This consensus applies to Israel's basic goals - Jewish political sovereignty and the ingathering of the exiles. Since long before the establishment of the state, Israel's citizens have left it to the top echelons of government to make all major decisions.

(4) There is a *saliency of ideologies* in Israel. 'Vision' is a popular word in Israeli political parlance. One of the parties competing for representation in the Knesset in the last election proclaimed, in its attempts to win electoral support, that it was the 'party with values'. 'Interest', on the other hand, reflects narrow, not national, needs.

These four characteristics raise questions as to how interest groups can exist in a centralist system, controlled by parties, resting on a

[1] B. Akzin, 'The Role of Parties in Israeli Democracy, *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 17 (1955), pp. 507-45.

comprehensive consensus with a national ideology at its core. There is also the question of the legitimacy accorded them by society, and of the borderlines between them and the government bodies they deal with - borderlines which must be clearly drawn if the state is to function democratically.

Overview

Interest groups usually have either a social[2] or an organizational basis.[3] The social basis refers to groups which are the product of the occupational diversity which comes with socio-economic development. The ensuing disruption of social balance pushes the 'injured' into groups. The organizational basis refers to interest groups growing out of an individual's initiative and investment.

In Israel both these sets of circumstances have been much in evidence. There has been an enormous population increase (from half a million to over three million) as a result of Jewish immigration, and a growth of the gross national product. The rise in the standard of living was accompanied by the creation of a social gap, and the development of industry and of agriculture have created social groupings with diverse interests. The variety of approaches to Israel's security problems has also found expression in the formation of citizens' organizations. Entrepreneurs have also been plentiful. A highly politicized state like Israel was fertile ground for the growth of potential leaders and the development of interest groups, which today form a dense and intricate network in the country.

Israel is a pluralistic society, with a decisive Jewish majority and other national minorities. The Jewish population itself is a rich cultural mix. In addition to cultural and economic gaps, there are those between the religious and the secular, the traditional and the modern. Political attitudes range from those who advocate the establishment of a Palestinian state to those who would like to see Israeli rule extended to both banks of the Jordan. Israel is not only a multi-party society, but also a 'multi-group' one. Unofficial estimates claim that there are over 600 public organizations in Israel, not counting small groups (i.e., which are not listed in the telephone directory) or sub-groups of roof organizations. The latter number in the hundreds.

In 1955 there were only forty two public organizations registered in Israel.[4] But while in the past there was one organization of Israeli businessmen, today there are separate bodies for big and small businessmen, and a number of bi-national Chambers of Commerce. Every new cultural group has formed at least one

[2] See D. Truman, *The Governmental Process*, New York (A. Knopf) 1963.
[3] See R.H. Salisbury, 'An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups', *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 13 (February 1969), pp. 1-32.
[4] M. Ater (ed.), *The Israel Yearbook 1955* (Israel Publications), pp. 273-4.

immigrants' association. For example, there are currently three organizations of immigrants from the Soviet Union: two which split along party lines, and a third group of Georgian immigrants. Natives of innumerable towns and villages in Poland and Lithuania have established organizations of their own.

This has also been the pattern in professional organizations. The Union of High School Teachers broke away from the Union of Primary School Teachers. The Architects Union broke away from the Federation of Engineers and Architects on the grounds that it did not represent their interests. The architects function separately from the Engineers Union, which is an integral part of the General Federation of Labour (Histadrut). With all these sub-divisions, there is also the tendency to create roof organizations or at least to cooperate on specific issues. For example, managers' groups have united into the Economic Organizations Coordinating Board which has 15 sub-divisions.

Interest groups are as varied in Israel as they are in other countries. Some see their primary aim as the protection of the material interests of their members, and some are ideological. There are 'producers' groups, for those who produce goods or services, and 'consumers' groups, for those who use them. A distinction should be made between public and private interest groups. 'Public interest' refers to the common good; 'private', to the benefit of a specific group or individuals.

The ecological groups (ten in number) which are united under one roof organization, Life and Environment, constitute one of the major public interest groups. They deal with issues such as noise and air pollution, the preservation of natural resources, and the prevention of damage to the environment. Israel's five consumers organizations are divided on a sectoral basis (one belongs to the General Federation of Labour, one is religious, and one consists mainly of immigrants from English-speaking countries). There are two organizations concerned with the defence of citizens' rights. Groups working for the individuals' welfare include the Family Planning League, the Public Health League, and the Israel Cancer Association. Groups have also been formed to influence foreign and security policy, such as Gush Emunim and Peace Now. Most of these groups were founded in the past decade, and are concerned largely with settlement policy in the territories gained in the Six-Day War.

Private interest groups are those concerned with the promotion of the specific interests of either their own members, or of others outside the group. The first type includes organizations of employees, employers, merchants and retailers, farmers and professionals. The oldest and most powerful union is the General Federation of Labour (Histadrut), which includes some thirty-eight trade unions. The Histadrut is more than a 'group', since almost sixty per cent (58.4%) of Israelis belong to it. There are three other

labour organizations in Israel: The National Federation of Labour, and the Labour Federations of the Mizrachi and of Agudath Israel, each of them affiliated to a political party. As for employers, their organizations are united under the roof organization known as the Coordinating Board. Most prominent in this category are the Manufacturers Association, the Farmers Association, the Chamber of Commerce and the Builders and Contractors Association. The 'producers' also include the members of the liberal professions united into 16 interest groups. Some of the professional organizations also function as trade unions within the Histadrut.

Private interest groups also encompass a plethora of ethnic and other categories. There are over forty ethnic organizations in Israel whose membership is based on country of origin. Another group includes women's organizations. Here, too, subdivisions have formed: the conventional charity and volunteer groups (such as WIZO), and the more recent militant groups which have a smaller membership and are concerned with women's liberation. The latter, although their goals are related to a group, can hardly be called private interest groups, since the feminist movement, at least, is concerned with changing the structure of socity and not only with promoting the interests of the female sex.

There are, in addition, a small number of friendship leagues with other states and organizations whose goal is mainly social, such as the Rotary Club or the Freemasons. On the whole, public societies whose main aim is to provide their members with entertainment in their leisure hours are far less common in Israel than in other Western countries.

Any discussion of interest groups in Israel must mention those representing the deprived. Although not always institutionalized and often ephemeral, these groups are part of the political landscape of the country. These include groups of (or on behalf of) the poor, such as the Black Panthers or the Arab minority, such as The Committee for the Defence of Arab Land. This category also includes religious extremists such as the Committee for the Protection of the Sanctity of Israel and other extreme groups which are generally organized around a specific issue.

Structural Aspects

An examination of the structure of interest groups - that is, their formation, membership patterns and sources of financing - will help to determine their dependency on governmental resources.

Origins

Many interest groups in Israel are founded with full government sanction. All the groups concerned with the quality of the environment were founded by decisions taken by one or another government body. For example, the Council for a Beautiful Israel

was set up in accordance with a decision taken by a Knesset committee in 1968. The same is true of the Better Homes Society, the Council for the Prevention of Noise and Air Pollution and the Road Accidents Prevention Council. But not only neutral groups whose aims are ideologically incontrovertible were created by government decisions: Gush Emunim, for example, was also established 'from above'. This group, whose aim was to settle the whole of *Eretz Yisrael* in its biblical historic boundaries, was formed by a faction of the National Religious Party. The foundation and organization of the Movement for a Secure Peace, which supports Begin's policy in the negotiations with Egypt, was inspired by the Herut party.

Even the sort of voluntary organization which in the West is almost always private has received the stamp of government approval in Israel. The Centre for Voluntary Services was founded by the government in 1977 in order to take volunteer organizations for helping the handicapped and disabled under its wing.

The same applies to consumer organizations. The Israel Consumer Council, which coordinates consumer protection activities throughout the country, is registered as a private-government company, with seventy five per cent of its shares held by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism.

The Histadrut, Israel's largest and most important interest group, presents a special case. Both its origins and its nature differ from the others.

Unlike its counterparts elsewhere in the world, the Histadrut is not a federation of trade unions but a monolithic and centralized organization. It has a number of other unique features: it does not concern itself simply with representing the workers' interests but constitutes what is, in effect, a 'state within a state', the scope of whose activities and functions encompasses all areas of social and political life in the country. It deals with educational and cultural activities, social security, and medical services. *Hevrat ha-Ovdim*, one of its subsidiaries, is a giant concern which supplies about twenty per cent of the net national product.

Thus, the Histadrut can hardly be described as an interest group (usually defined as confining itself to *influencing* the government). It was also founded in special circumstances, serving as a tool for the labour parties, especially the majority party (Ahduth ha-Avodah, later Mapai, later the Alignment) in building the nation and its socio-economic infrastructure. As S.N. Eisenstadt has pointed out, the purpose of the Histadrut was to create conditions for the development and organization of a new working class, rather than to protect the interests of an existing one. Its establishment was part of a comprehensive political programme originating in *parties* and not in spontaneous popular initiative. In the pre-state period the Histadrut controlled most of the social functions - settlement, education, health, and even security. When

statehood was attained, most of these functions were transferred to government institutions, although the status and functions of the Histadrut are still far beyond those of a normal trade union. Over the years the Histadrut underwent political changes as labour organizations identified with parties of the right entered its ranks, but it continued to maintain close connections with the political élite as long as the labour parties were in power.

Confrontations between the heads of the Histadrut and the economic ministers in the government were not infrequent and the General Secretary of the Histadrut occasionally showed independence and took a firm stand on workers' rights considered incompatible with national economic interests. But these examples were more the exception than the rule. In general the Histadrut and the government acted like two arms of the same body - the political party whose policy they acted on and whose interests they represented.

With the shift to the Likud government the situation changed drastically and the Histadrut found itself in the opposition. This change, whose consequences are not yet evident, may well have a decisive influence on the alignment of interest groups in Israel. Although 'hunger marches' have in the past been organized by parties in opposition to the leadership of the Histadrut, the resources controlled by the latter groups were in no way comparable to those of the Histadrut today. At the same time, 30 per cent of Histadrut members are Likud supporters, which limits its power as a labour organization. This situation demonstrates how closely involved the interest group in Israel is with the political parties - especially when 'interest' is usually defined in terms of national goals.

Membership Patterns

With one exception, membership in interest groups is voluntary. The exception is the Israel Bar Association, established by the Knesset (1961) as a statutory body in which membership is compulsory for all legal practitioners (except judges). Other professional organizations, such as the Engineers and Architects Union and the Medical Federation aspire to the same status, but the government has shown no signs of responding to their demands.

Membership in other public organizations is voluntary and depends on incentive, whether they offer information services or the protection of professional interests or status. Membership in such groups is not the rule in Israel. Apart from the Histadrut, only about thirty per cent of adult Israelis are members of public organizations.[5] A larger number participate sporadically in the activities of interest groups. The most conspicuous reward is that offered by the Histadrut, which provides its members with the all-

[5] E. Katz and M. Gurevitch, *The Secularization of Leisure: Culture and Communication in Israel*, London (Faber and Faber) 1976, p. 135.

important medical services. It controls the largest sick fund in Israel, Kupat Ḥolim, which provides over seventy per cent (71.8%) of the population with medical care. Until the present government implements its plan to institute national health insurance (against the bitter opposition of the Histadrut Sick Fund) most Israelis will continue to require the services of Kupat Ḥolim. According to the present arrangement there is no possibility of separating membership in the Histadrut Sick Fund from membership in the trade unions. This raises the question of how voluntary Histadrut membership is, since surveys have shown that a large percentage of its members joined mainly because of the sick fund.

Sources of Financing

The activities of interest groups in Israel are frequently financed by the state. As already mentioned, some of the groups were established by government decision, and the state is their chief source of financing. The activities of the Israel Consumers Council and of the Council for a Beautiful Israel are financed entirely by the national budget. In addition, the state treasury streams money (directly and indirectly) into a wide range of public organizations. The Defence Ministry participates in the financing or organization of disabled war veterans and bereaved families. The Ministry of Absorption participates in the budgets of ethnic organizations, and the Ministries of Health and Welfare allocate money to voluntary social welfare organizations.

An exception to the rule of public financing are the employers and labour organizations - but even here things are not so simple. The Histadrut, which possesses huge resources, streams money, directly and indirectly, into the political parties. According to the law called the Wage Protection Law, part of the money paid in dues to the Histadrut by its members is allocated to its affiliated parties on the basis of their relative electoral strength (unless the individual member has expressly objected to this arrangement). A number of cases of corruption, too, whose details are still obscure, have been connected with the transfer of money from the Histadrut and its institutions to party political funds. At the same time, the Histadrut itself is a beneficiary of government funds - at least with regard to its chief institution - Kupat Ḥolim - which receives a large annual subsidy from the state.

Does the massive participation of the state in the budgets of public organizations create dependence or represent a pattern of a corporative system? There is no clear-cut answer to this question. It is difficult for an organization supported by the state treasury to oppose the government or attack its policies. But such funding does not create a one-sided dependence so much as it expresses a mutual dependence resting on a consensus - an often unspoken agreement on the rules of the game.

Targets of Activity

Interest groups may try to influence the public, other groups, or the government (in which case they become *pressure* groups). Within the government pressures may be put on the legislature (members of the Knesset or its committees) or on the executive (Ministers or their senior officials). They may also aim at the source of power - the parties, their leaders or officials. The foci of interest groups' efforts may be seen as the centres of power in the state. Who, according to this formula, rules the State of Israel?

No generalization could answer this question; the foci of activity have varied from group to group and from issue to issue. But certain trends do predominate.

Since Israel is a party state, interest groups might have been expected to direct their efforts towards the political parties. But this appears to be true of a very limited number of cases, at least in so far as party forums are concerned. The campaign of the Israel Medical Federation against the Health Insurance Bill proposed by the Alignment government in 1976 is one example of an effective appeal to a political party. In this case, one of the smaller parties in the coalition (the Independent Liberal party) prevented the law from being passed, almost causing a government crisis. By turning to the Independent Liberal party, the Medical Federation hoped to reinforce its opposition to the National Health Insurance Law.

Although some religious interest groups also maintain close connections with religious political parties, this is not a common occurrence. An exception to this rule is the case of the settlement organizations (such as Kibbutz Artzi-ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir) whose connections with political parties are open and unequivocal.

Most interest groups claim to be apolitical, but what this in fact means is non-*party*-political. Some of their leaders are openly associated with political parties (such as Dr. Ram Yishai, chairman of the Medical Association, who is a central figure in the Labour Party, or Rabbi Ḥaim Drukman, one of the leaders of Gush Emunim, who is a National Religious Party Knesset member). But the interest groups claim that they are non-partisan, i.e., that they consist of members of different parties and are not identified with the ideology of a particular one. Even the representatives of ideological movements such as Gush Emunim claim that they are unaffiliated and have no aspirations towards influencing any particular party.

What the groups do, in fact, is try and influence representatives of the party in the seat of power, i.e., in the Knesset or the government. Researchers assume that interest groups aim at the centers of power - in parliamentary systems, the executive; and in presidential systems, the legislature. The principle applies, to a great extent, in Israel, too.

It appears that most of the applications of interest groups in Israel are indeed directed towards the executive. But contrary to the approach stressing the power of the parties, most of their contacts are with the senior civil service, which is apolitical. The Likud's ascension did not incur drastic changes in the upper echelons of the government. Although the new ministers brought their close assistants with them, many of the incumbent top officials remained in their jobs. It is these key figures who are the main targets for the institutionalized interest groups, especially the producer groups.

The Knesset, too, serves as a focus for the activities of the groups, especially with regard to proposed legislation. At the final stage of legislation, when the proposed bill is discussed in committee after having passed the first reading in the Knesset, applications are often made. But these are more for the sake of publicity than anything else. In the majority of cases, the applications will thus be made to the government administration.

The non-producing groups, especially the deprived groups, select other targets for their activities. As in other Western countries, these groups, which lack political resources, need a reference public and the assistance of the media. Ecological groups are also mainly concerned with arousing public awareness.

Most leaders of interest groups claim that they are trying to influence the public at large, whereas in fact most of their contacts are with specific officials. They would rather avoid creating the image of a 'lobbyist' seeking favours on a personal basis.

Direct political action is actually widespread, contrary to the image of Israel as a society in which the public seldom raises its voice and leaves the business of politics to its representatives. While street demonstrations and individual and group penetration into the world of political decision-making are not an everyday occurrence, they are nevertheless an integral part of the Israeli political scene.

The widespread notion that Israelis took to the streets only after the Six-Day War, in order to express their opposition to or support for government policy in security and foreign affairs, is false. Angry demonstrations took place in Israel at the beginning of the fifties against unemployment and poverty and again in 1965 on a variety of social and political issues. Problems concerned with religion, welfare, security and foreign affairs, and even with internal political arrangements, found an outlet in the direct action of interest groups. Since Sadat's visit (November 19, 1977) Israel has been humming with direct political action on questions of foreign policy. Most of the demonstrations have centred on the economic situation, welfare and foreign policy, and only a few have been concerned with environmental issues, which are not high on the list of priorities for Israelis.

Consultation is one of the most common ways of influencing the

administration, which needs the information, expertise and cooperation it can gain from relevant groups. Consultation may be the official procedure, as in Scandinavia, or arbitrary, as in England, where consulting interest groups is subject to the decision of the government in every case.

Israel generally follows the English example, with the notable exception of the Histadrut. The National Health Insurance Bill was passed without prior consultation with the Medical Federation, and the Educational Reform Law without prior consultation with the teachers' organizations. In economic affairs, however, the participation of interest groups is much greater. Official consultation procedures exist (such as in the Labour Relations Board and the Economic Advisory Board to the Minister of Finance) side by side with unofficial consultations between the shapers of economic policy and the heads of labour and employers organizations. Of course, previous governments tended to be closer to the labour organizations, as the present government is with the employers' organizations. In both regimes Israel's economic policy is the product of advise-and-consent strategy between the government and the interest groups concerned. This does not mean that Israeli Ministers always consult with interest groups before introducing new measures (as in the case of the New Economic Policy launched in 1977, centering mainly on the liberalization of foreign currency controls). It means, rather, that faults in government-sponsored policies which only become evident after they are officially announced are usually rectified later as a result of group pressures (i.e., consultations).

Interest groups may be represented in the Knesset, by one of the members of the house or by a professional representative (lobbyist); or in the administration, by committees composed of representatives of the government and of the groups. A number of Knesset members can be identified as representatives of the interest groups who clearly appointed them as their representatives in the party. This discussion does not relate to factions which constitute official interest groups in the political parties. Many Knesset members represent factions in their parties, without necessarily being identified with extra-parliamentary interest groups. These include mainly the representatives of the *moshav* and *kibbutz* movements, which, while fitting into the category of interest groups, are identified almost completely with political parties. Other interest groups represented in the Knesset include the Histadrut, the Teachers Union, the Public Transport Cooperative, the Black Panthers, the Farmers Union, the Contractors Centre, and the Engineers Union. Even the feminist movement, due to a fortuitous combination of circumstances, succeeded in sending a representative to the Knesset for a short period as a member of one of the political parties. Most Knesset members, however, are not willing to be unequivocally linked with

interest groups, tending rather to identify themselves with broader social strata, in keeping with the Israelis' tendency to reject particularist interests.

The parties, on the other hand, have no objections to absorbing lobbyists. In the extreme proportional representation system used in Israel, identification with a group is expected to bring votes to the party, and it is thus common practice for parties to coopt representatives of groups, or even for the groups themselves to stand for the elections on separate lists. The feminist movement, the Yemenite Union and the Black Panthers all ran for the last elections without, however, winning a single seat.

Do lobbies exist in Israel in the same form as in other Western states? The answer to this question is both yes and no. No, since there are no laws or other arrangements enabling professional lobbyists to operate in the legislature. Nor are there any adequate arrangements for consultations and the provision of information to members of the legislature. For the most part, the Knesset relies on the experts within its ranks for advice on specific issues. Applications to interest groups are infrequent. The answer is also yes, since the better-organized interest groups send professional representatives whose role is to keep abreast of the agendas of the Knesset committees and maintain contact with powerful members. The Israeli lobby has developed in another and unexpected direction: Knesset members who sympathize with the positions of various interest groups (e.g., low-income groups, political doves and hawks) without necessarily having been recruited by them, serve as their spokesmen in the Knesset itself. While there is no knowing as yet how permanent or regular a feature of the Israeli political scene this kind of lobbying will become, the phenomenon of cutting across party lines which it represents is certainly a new one in Israel.

Interest group representation in government bodies operates mainly by means of committees or boards consisting of government officials and lobbyists. As a result of the extremely centralized regime many areas of social activity are ordered and regulated by committees of this type. In Israel there is a 'politics of water', of housing, of agricultural produce, and even of cement, which is doled out by public committees. These areas, like many others, are controlled by 'boards' which are partly public organizations (i.e., interest groups) and partly government bodies.

An example of this is the Fruit Board, which began as a voluntary framework and attained statutory status in 1973. Although the directors of the board, which regulates fruit production and marketing in Israel, are appointed by government ministers, half of its members are from the general public. The public in this case means 'organizations which in the opinion of the ministers are representative of the growers', i.e., the Farmers Union and the *moshav* and *kibbutz* movements. These organizations, while they

are ostensibly professional ('growers' organizations as defined by the law) are actually party-political, since their members are identified with political parties. Since the seven parties in question (Labour, Mapam, Liberals, Herut, National Religious, Independent Liberal and Poalei Agudath Israel) all have affiliated agricultural settlers organizations, the Board has become an arena for inter-party squabbles rather than a sectoral forum for interest groups acting in the same field. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the connection between the settlers organizations and the political parties is today much weaker than it used to be. While some organizations are still homogeneous to the extent that over eighty per cent of their members vote for the same party (Kibbutz Artzi for Mapam, Kibbutz ha-Me'uhad for the Alignment, and the Herut-Betar Moshav Movement for the Likud), the phenomenon of a split vote has already made its appearance in others - such as the Moshav Movement where forty three per cent support the Alignment and twenty seven per cent voted Likud.[6] If this trend continues it is likely to create a new pattern of interest group activity. If party divisions between the settlers' organizations (which are the main interest groups in the country in areas such as the production and marketing of agricultural products, water and land) are replaced by party divisions within them, the struggle for the allocation of resources is likely to be directed more by real interests and less by party-political considerations.

The status of the other organizations participating in government committees is less institutionalized. In Israel, as in other countries, it is accepted practice to set up such committees to discuss difficult or controversial issues affecting the public. Such a committee was appointed, for example, to discuss the question of medical services in the country. Although its composition was ostensibly based on personal expertise and group representation, it was in fact composed of representatives of political streams or, more precisely, of people whose opinions were known to the minister in charge and favoured by him.

The 'old boy' network is in full force in the two highest political institutions in Israel - the Knesset and the Government. The political élite remains largely a network of personal relationships. The quickest and most popular means of clarifying or settling issues are still the telephone or personal contacts. Most of the interest groups have a patron in one of the political institutions, even if he is not their official representative. Since the 'iron law of oligarchy' applies to interest groups in Israel as it does in other places, the leadership tends to stay put and personal relations develop around them. These may be many-sided and multi-purpose. Representatives of interest groups (whether it be a professional group of accountants, an ideological group such as Gush

[6] Inspector General of Elections, *Results of Elections to the Ninth Knesset*, May 17, 1977, Jerusalem (Central Bureau of Statistics), 1977, pp. 57-69.

Emunim, or a 'deprived' group such as the Association of Large Families) will find at least one party leader, bureaucrat or Knesset member prepared to use his good offices on their behalf and act for them at other levels of the political power structure. This is the chain reaction method, which assumes that making contact with one focus of power will lead it to influence other foci.

It would thus appear that while interest groups are in many instances part of the system of government in Israel, this system is spread over a wide network of organizations. Government in Israel has many arms, some of which are manned by representatives of interest groups, with plenty of room for exerting pressure and maneuvering between the wide range of power foci.

Impact

How effective the influence exerted by pressure groups is remains a mystery. It is difficult to pinpoint what precisely influences government decisions, especially when contradictory pressures have been at play. Whether the government responds to group pressures, or bases its decisions on ideological grounds is difficult to determine. In Israel, as in other countries, it depends on the power of the group, the power of the government, and the relations between the government and the group.

The power of the group is measured by its resources, its internal cohesion, and the extent to which its values coincide with those of the society and the government.

Some groups are stronger than others in the matter of resources. The stronger ones include groups such as the Histadrut and the Manufacturers Association. As for the labour organization, its great heterogeneity is the source of both its strength and of its weakness. The government's partiality to the industrial sector is not the result of powerful 'pressure', but of national considerations.

It has been hypothesized that a significant change in values took place during the past year. The virtual consensus that united the nation seems to have been stronger when the Labour Alignment was in power. Despite the Likud's electoral victory, its more extreme positions, especially in foreign and security affairs, have caused the emergence of groups which challenge its policies loudly and dramatically. While it is difficult to imagine the government yielding to the pressures of groups in polar opposition to the main points of its policy, it would be reasonable to expect some softening of positions in response to strong pressures. The question is: if success is one of the main incentives which encourage such groups to carry on, how long will they sustain their pressures without the prospect of visible results?

Government power is also a changing variable. Its strength depends not only on its numerical power (the number of votes the

coalition commands in relation to the opposition) but also on its internal cohesion, on the pressures of the various factions within the parties, etc. A 'weak' government is more likely to respond more easily to outside pressures, especially when these have traditionally been numbered among their supporters.

Relations between the groups and the government are almost a matter of tradition. Despite the groups' denial of being 'political', many of them in fact function within political constellations from which it would be difficult to detach them. Only a few groups are at the centre of such constellations (i.e., maintain open connections with a specific party, such as the Greater Land of Israel Movement with the Likud), but many more function within them, albeit on their fringes.

The amount of influence exerted by the group on public policy depends on how close they are to the government in values and power resources, and how large their demands are. Groups which are closer to the government, such as the Rafah settlers, are likely to bring about greater changes in political decisions, without any relation to their objective power or resources.

During Israel's first thirty years its government showed a tendency to respond to strong group pressures, although there are some who hold that this response was only superficial. The absence of manifestations of mass violence in Israeli politics seems to point to the government's responsiveness to group pressures, a view which is also supported by other facts. Despite the centralism of the Israeli political system, it offers a wide range of channels of influence on policies and politicians. A deprived minority will always find an opposition party or less deprived sector in a large public organization which will be glad to represent its interests.

Legitimation and Success

A twofold question arises in a discussion of interest groups in Israel: (a) how much legitimization do the groups gain and how well do they sustain it? and (b) how far do the groups succeed in maintaining their separateness from the state?

Interest groups appear to be gaining legitimization in Israel. The test of this is in their very existence and in the range of their activities. Interest groups have grown markedly in Israel, both with regard to structures and procedures. They have increased in number, their impact is greater, and it appears, although no conclusive research has yet been done on the subject, that their confidence is growing. The proposal to set up a group to influence the government will not be as lightly dismissed today as it was in the past, and it will be easier to harness the resources to do so. Groups are active in every area of public life and in many different fields. The League of Users of Public Transport, The Society for the Preservation of the Heritage of Iranian Jewry, and the Peace Now

movement are only a few examples of the newer interest groups. Stress is still placed on the *public* interest. Even a group of sailors demanding a wage rise will play down the economic basis of their demand and stress their attempt to improve the situation of the Israeli navy. The basis of legitimization still focuses on ideals rather than interests. One of the paradoxes of the Israeli political system is the multiplicity of parties on the one hand and the sanctification of unity - in other words, the rejection of group association - on the other. This phenomenon may be understood in the light of the different goals of the party and the group. The goals of the former are seen as 'national', albeit from a specific point of view, whereas those of the latter are based on 'self-interest'.

The second question is more complex and has no clear-cut answer. The parties still control matters in Israel, with the result that the 'spontaneous' founding and operation of interest groups is quite often organized from above. This may be readily understood in the light of the crucial roles played by the parties in the process of nation-building, which demanded the integration of different social elements and did not grant legitimization to divisions on the basis of interests.

At the same time, changes are taking place in Israeli society - changes of which the recent transfer of power was only one expression. The change of government revealed that there were four types of interest groups, distinguished by their degree of independence from, or integration with, the government:

(a) *Integrated groups*. These are groups which constitute almost an arm of the government. They include (1) groups which are socio-economically and ideologically close to the political élite. Under the labour government these were mainly the *kibbutz* and *moshav* movements and Histadrut; while the Likud government is closer to the liberal party associations of industrialists and businessmen. The change in regime led to a change in the groups, but not in the pattern of interaction between them and the central political institutions. (2) This category also includes groups which are ideologically 'neutral', acting as regulatory mechanisms of the government rather than expressing special group interests, such as the environmental and consumer groups, etc. As under the previous regime, the latter are under state patronage and continue their previous patterns of activity, although here and there changes in the leadership have taken place.

(b) *Non-Integrated* - Here, too, we find two types of groups: (1) those which the government depends on for the smooth functioning of socio-economic life in the country (such as the Histadrut and its subdivisions), and (2) the opposition groups. While the positive tie that existed between the government and the Histadrut in the past has been replaced by a dependent relationship, there is still close cooperation between the two.

In the opposition groups, the political organization which ruled Israel for a generation found an additional channel for political activity. The organization of interest groups constituted an active extra-parliamentary opposition to the new regime. The outstanding example of this is the Peace Now movement, whose members share common views regarding foreign and security policy.

In between these categories are ephemeral, politically neutral, organizations which emerge to meet the needs of their members and have no obvious connections with the government. The impact of these groups on government decisions is very weak and they make little impression on the public.

The future is hard to predict. Interest groups are only one piece in the jigsaw puzzle of the political system in Israel, which has up to now rested on a broad national consensus regarding the goals of Zionism. This consensus has never been seriously challenged and has placed personal (or personal-group) interests low on its scale of values. The shattering of this consensus, or one critical change in the system, may lead to drastic changes not only in the nature of interest groups in Israel but in the entire political system.

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ROYAL SUCCESSION POSSIBILITIES VIEWED

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[Text] **Internal moves to put the House of Saud in order, possibly culminating in a cabinet reshuffle and a resolution of the succession problem, have enabled the oil-rich Arab state to throw its weight on one side of the scales causing satisfaction in the Arab world and dismay in America.** *Tewfik Mishlawi* **in Beirut examines the emerging realities and oil policies in this new light.** *Bob Lebling* **in Washington reviews the US-Saudi "special relationship", while** *Mark Bruzonksy* **reports on possible US anti-boycott measures that may further strain relations.**

Crown Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia left Riyadh unexpectedly in March for what an official announcement 24 hours later called "medical checkups" in Spain. This trip, coming at a crucial moment in the history of Saudi Arabia and the Middle East as a whole, caused considerable concern and anxiety in royal circles.

The ailing King Khaled, hitherto seen mainly as a figurehead, suddenly began to assert his sovereign powers by taking personal charge of state affairs, including foreign policy. Government sources in Riyadh, confused and bewildered by persistent rumours of a conflict among the princes, wondered whether this could mark the end of Fahd's role and the beginning of Khaled's effective control.

For nearly four years, Crown Prince Fahd, who is also First Deputy Prime Minister, has been handling affairs of the state on the strength of a written authorisation from the King, dated 3 April 1975, a few weeks after the assassination of King Faisal. Since then, Fahd has been the principal power-wielder in the desert Kingdom that sits on the world's largest oil reserves.

A few days before his unscheduled trip to Spain, Prince Fahd had presided over a stormy cabinet meeting. At the top of the agenda were the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, which has divided the Arab world, and US-Saudi relations, which have been strained for over a year.

It was perhaps the first time that Saudi leaders had found themselves in such a highly complex situation where crucial decisions had to be made quickly to maintain the Kingdom's pre-eminent position and influence in the region, especially after the Iranian revolution.

President Sadat's sensational drive for peace with Israel was a formidable challenge to Riyadh, which has been his principal political and financial supporter since he became President nine years ago.

It had been decided last year to leave Sadat free to practise his dramatic diplomacy as long as he kept his promise to bring about a comprehensive peace settlement.

But in subsequent months, Saudi Arabia, like other conservative Arab states, became increasingly sceptical about the initiative. The uncertainty kept dormant the seeds of a dispute between rival princes within the Saudi royal family.

As time went by, developments in the region made Saudi leaders realise that the decisions had to be taken, and differences of opinion over what policy to adopt could no longer be ignored. The crux of the disagreement was whether or not Saudi Arabia should support the US-sponsored peace efforts between Egypt and Israel.

The first victim of this conflict of views was Kamal Adham, the 60-year-old political advisor to King Khaled and to his predecessor, Faisal. A terse official announcement three months ago said King Khaled had accepted Adham's resignation, but gave no explanation. Unofficial reports said Adham was a staunch advocate of greater Saudi support for President Sadat's peace initiative and closer co-operation with the US.

Adham's dismissal was the first indication of a growing Arab nationalist trend within the ruling family towards caution in relations with the US and restraint over Sadat's drive for peace. This trend is reportedly led by Second Deputy Premier Prince Abdullah Ibn-Abdel-Aziz, who is also Commander of the National Guard. He is supported by Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal, National Security Chief Prince Mutaab and the Governor of Riyadh, Prince Salman.

On the opposite side are key pro-West members of the Royal Family who advocate formal long-term security arrangements with the US. This group is reportedly led by Crown Prince Fahd, and includes Defence & Aviation Minister Prince Sultan Ibn-Abdel-Aziz, Interior Minister Prince Nayef and Oil Minister Shaikh Ahmad Zaki Yamani, who, though not a member of the Royal Family, wields considerable power.

The recent visit to Saudi Arabia by US Defence Secretary Harold Brown was said to have brought the conflict between the two groups to a head. Significantly, when Brown arrived, Prince Abdullah, the National Guard Commander, had already left for a visit to Syria, where he joined Syrian Defence Minister Major-General Mustafa Tlas in an inspection tour of Syrian frontline positions facing Israel. As a key figure in charge of Saudi security, Abdullah should have stayed at home for the talks with Brown, Saudi sources said.

When war broke out between North Yemen and Soviet-backed South Yemen last February, Defence Minister Prince Sultan declared "partial mobilisation" of the army and recalled the 1,200-man Saudi contingent serving with the Arab Deterrent Force in Lebanon. Officially this move was dictated by the Yemeni conflict, but political observers in the Middle East said the Saudis overreacted.

Saudi Government policy goals are traditionally kept secret but speculative reports linked the mobilisation to the conflict in the Royal Family. Some sources alleged that Prince Sultan, who is effectively in charge of the Army and Air Force, was retaliating for "provocation" by his rival, Prince Abdullah.

Unconfirmed reports said that Prince Abdullah had deployed the bulk of his 35,000-strong National Guard in the Eastern Province and had almost sealed off the oil-rich region from the rest of the country.

Confirmation of this is nearly impossible but the rivalry between Abdullah and Sultan is generally regarded as an open secret, and both are known to have ambitions towards the throne.

On the whole, it seems that the nationalist flank is gaining in influence as shown by official Saudi support for Arab hardliners opposed to the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. The new, more active role of 67-year-old King Khaled may be partly responsible for this.

In an interview with a Lebanese publication on 1 April King Khaled categorically denied US intelligence reports that he planned to abdicate in six months time for health reasons. After two successful open-heart operations, he said, he felt well and was fully capable of carrying out his responsibilities.

In the absence of Prince Fahd, he received foreign statesmen including King Hussain of Jordan and President Ahmad Hassan Bakr of Iraq, replied to letters from other heads of state and controlled Saudi policy at the Baghdad conference through Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal, instructing the Saudi delegation to support Arab punitive action against Egypt. Moreover the state-inspired information media gave prominence to his activities on a daily basis.

The dramatic outcome of the conference was a good indication of exactly who was gaining the upper hand in Saudi Arabia. Western diplomatic sources in Jeddah now make no secret of what they call the "struggle for influence" between the "hawks" and the "doves" in the Royal Family. The diplomats insist, however, that this is not a "struggle for power" aimed at overthrowing the monarchy or changing the system of government.

On the contrary, none of the princes wishes to see the monarchy overthrown. "They all have an interest in keeping it, for if it goes, they would all lose," one diplomat said. The fact that the conflict has been so tactfully contained, thanks to King Khaled's paternal and conciliatory role, shows clearly that the adversaries are keen to preserve a necessary minimum of cohesion and solidarity in the family.

Usually informed sources in Beirut, however, forecast that there will soon be a cabinet reshuffle in which Crown Prince Fahd, who feels let down by the dramatic twist in Saudi foreign policy, will take over the Foreign Ministry. Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal will be put in charge of Oil & Minerals, replacing Yamani, who will become Minister of Planning. The present Minister of Planning, Hisham al-Nazer, will become Ambassador to the US.

The vexed issue of the succession has apparently been resolved, with Fahd first in line followed by Prince Abdullah and then Prince Sultan. Although this seems to preserve the balance between the two camps, it in fact maintains the predominance of the nationalists, for Fahd is not in good health. In the event of Khaled's death, therefore, real power would probably devolve upon Abdullah.

Differences between the two camps extend beyond foreign policy. Shaikh Yamani and his Chief Deputy, Abdel-Hadi al-Taher, the Governor of Petromin, have been leading rival currents of thought on oil-production policy, another controversial issue on which policy-makers are sharply divided.

Minister of state Taher has repeatedly argued for a low level of production to conserve the nation's resources. Yamani, on the other hand believes Saudi Arabia is duty-bound to meet the world's oil needs and should ensure stability in the international economy.

A third, but perhaps less conspicuous, controversy concerns the Army and National Guard. Prince Sultan, the Defence Minister, has been trying to push plans for expanding and strengthening the Army and Air Force, with conscription going into effect this year. National Guard Commander Prince Abdullah views this with suspicion.

The nationalist princes believe there are limits to what a strong and sophisticated army can do. They are aware of the risks entailed in buying costly weapons at the expense of economic development and they know that supersonic fighters and other advanced weapons will do little to preserve internal security.

Furthermore, although they are interested in limited military co-operation with the US, they do not want Washington to intrude too far into Saudi affairs. While admitting the need for US co-operation and support they prefer to keep other options open, by maintaining relations with the Arab hardline states, and even hinting at the possible establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

The clearest example of this new trend in Saudi policy came from Commerce Minister Sulaiman Solaim, who said in a recent speech in the US, "I hope we don't run into difficulty or unrealistic expectations ... We will have trouble in our relationship if you expect us to force other oil producers to hold down prices and to promote acceptance of an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty by other Arab countries and Palestinian organisations. You can count on our moderate attitude in both areas if your side, particularly Congress, understands that there are limits to what we can do."

But Solaim's remarks were apparently optimistic compared with what the Government was planning at home. Saudi endorsement of the boycott of Egypt surprised even the Arab hardliners, let alone the US, Egypt and Israel. For the Americans it was a let-down; the Egyptians saw it as a stab in the back; for the Arab hardliners it was a major victory.

Like most other Arab countries, Saudi Arabia insists on a "just and comprehensive peace" settlement in the Middle East based on complete Israeli evacuation of all Arab

territories occupied during the 1967 war, including the Arab sector of Jerusalem, and recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and statehood. Unlike the radical states, however, Saudi Arabia was ready to support President Carter's peace effort provided any settlement was based on these conditions.

A separate Egypt-Israeli peace, on the other hand, was completely unacceptable. Hardliners in Damascus, Baghdad, Tripoli, and Algiers were viewed with growing sympathy in Riyadh, and the pressure mounted.

The tightrope policy which Saudi Arabia had been pursuing since Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in November 1977 was no longer acceptable, and a decision had to be made. "You're with the Arabs or against the Arabs; there is no third way," Iraqi President Bakr told the Baghdad conference.

Several factors influenced the Saudi decision. Apart from the pressure at home, Saudi leaders were deeply concerned about regional developments like the revolution in Iran, the Syrian-Iraqi rapprochement, Soviet expansion in Asia and the Horn of Africa and the attitude of the US.

Saudi Arabia has three principal objects in the Middle East: to keep the USSR out of the region, to maintain Arab solidarity, under Saudi leadership if possible, and to achieve a just settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict. All are of equal importance, but Washington has failed to appreciate this. Saudi leaders were clearly not pleased with President Carter's gunboat diplomacy aimed at protecting them against Soviet-inspired agitation in the area.

Despite differences in Arab social systems, the Saudis firmly believe that Soviet communism has little chance of establishing a significant stronghold in the region. Even in South Yemen, the Marxist regime has recently been forced to toe the Arab line. Riyadh's recent mutual-security pact with the Baath Socialist regime in Iraq, *(see Tareq Aziz interview p 39)*, where a fierce anti-communist campaign has been under way, shows an understanding on the part of Saudi leaders that the Syrian and Iraqi Baathists, while co-operating closely with Moscow, are ideologically opposed to communism.

The Saudis are adept at using a combination of moneybag diplomacy and Islamic leadership to maintain their influence with the radical Arab states and the Palestinian organisations. Strengthening Arab solidarity, enhancing Islam and helping the poorer Arab states out of their financial difficulties are enough to keep Soviet communism away, they argue.

Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal recently said that the main cause of instability in the Middle East was not Soviet influence, but Israel's occupation of Arab lands. Thus he pinpointed the fundamental difference between Saudi Arabia and the US. Saudi Arabia seems to have realised where its interests lie. And the US would do well to understand that having Saudi Arabia inside the Arab fold could be an advantage.

Saudi Arabia has its own way of retaining leadership in the Arab world, not by Nasser-style demagogy but by subtle diplomacy. Like other conservative regimes, it never wanted to lead, only to influence.

Its immediate concern is for the US to understand this. The Saudis hate to be pushed, and will react radically under pressure. They are willing to wait patiently for a Middle East settlement, but not for ever.

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SAUDI ARABIA

YAMANI WOULD DOUBLE PRODUCTION FOR PEACE

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[Excerpt]

In an effort to stimulate world interest in the search for a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Saudi Arabia is willing to double its oil production, now around 9.5 million barrels a day.

"We will not hesitate to produce twice as much as we are producing now, if that should be the price of an acceptable peace settlement in the Middle East," Saudi government sources told *The Middle East* recently.

Without such peace, they added, "there will continue to be a tight oil market, and oil-consumers will have to intensify their search for substitute sources of energy probably more expensive to find and develop."

The Saudis are in a position to say that. But they rule out an oil embargo similar to that imposed during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war.

Shaikh Ahmad Zaki Yamani, the architect of Saudi Arabia's oil policy, regards this as a "double edged weapon." However the minister, quite aware of his country's oil strength, has come up with an embargo of a different kind. This, according to sources close to him, would require Saudi Arabia to keep its present levels of production and allow world demand to grow. Eventually the impact of such a policy would be just as big as an outright embargo.

This explains why the Saudi Government has shelved a "detailed technical and economic plan" from the Arabian-American Oil Company, (ARAMCO), for expanding the country's oil production capacity to 16 million barrels per day until "more favourable conditions emerge". The plan has been shelved "even though it had been prepared at the Government's request", the sources said.

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MILITARY SITUATION VIEWED AS FAVORABLE TO POLISARIO

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[Article by Mino Vignolo: "How the Armed Vanguard of POLISARIO Lives and Operates in the Western Sahara; In the Desert With the Tactics of American Indians"]

[Text] From our special correspondent in the Western Sahara--In this corner of the Sahara one fights and one dies in silence. The spotlights of the international political scene are focused somewhere else and make people forget that a ferocious war is in full swing in one of the most desolate and fascinating places in the world. For its right to existence the people of the Sahel [Saharaui] are fighting for a stretch of wind-lashed rocks and sand, almost as large as Italy, against the men of a king who does not want to give up his dream of bringing about a rebirth of "the Great Morocco."

This is a people that suffers within the extensive tent-cities around Tinduf, the Algerian city situated at the crossroads of the frontiers between Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and Western Sahara, and within the great centers on the Atlantic Coast which is still occupied by the Moroccans and Mauritanians who 3 years ago received this portion of the Sahara as a gift from Spain.

At El Aaiun, at Dakhla (formerly Vila Cisneros), at La Guera and Tichla life has been an inferno for those Saharani who failed to escape before the arrival of "invader" Auteh Ahmed Ould Baba, an imposing old man with a long gray beard, who has just escaped from the former Rio de Oro, that part of the territory which today is occupied by the Mauritanians with the aid of Moroccan troops. The old man led a march across the desert leading to freedom 123 persons among whom were the elderly, the women, and the children who were living at Dakhla.

"We avoided those zones patrolled by Moroccan aircraft; we dared hunger, cold and thirst, because we could no longer endure living subjected to the foreigner. Thefts, torture, sex abuse...these are the rule in the occupied cities. Every Saharan has a dream of living in an independent Sahara." The determination of these people leave an impression upon the observer. Everyone is fighting his battle for independence; they are all guerrillas. There has never been a census taken of these nomadic "children of the clouds." Estimates run from 350,000 to one million persons; the more frequently mentioned number is

750,000. Omar Hadrami, member of the Executive Committee of POLISARIO (Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia El Hamra and Rio de Oro) told us: "When God created the World He gave this portion of the Sahara to the Saharani. This is our land and has been so since the beginning of time. We have never been either Moroccans or Algerians, nor Mauritanians. We have always fought for the preservation of our independence, and if need be we shall continue to fight on against anybody."

POLISARIO is something more than a liberation movement. "It is the soul of the people" as stated by Ahmed Baba Misken, an intellectual who hails from Tiris, a region on the borders of Rio de Oro and Mauritania. In a few instances an armed vanguard has thus blended in with the rest of the population despite all sorts of difficulties. Mao's doctrine that every guerrilla should move about within his society like a fish in water is being put into full practice here. Ever since 20 May 1973 the men of POLISARIO have been fighting for the independence of their country. The enemies have changed and the Spanish colonialists have been replaced by the Moroccans and the Mauretanians.

The Madrid Accord was the prize for the stroke of genius of Morocco's King Hassan who launched the famous "green march" by hundreds of thousands of poor devils sent on the gamble calculated to conquer this land. The Western Sahara territory was a temptation because of its subsoil wealth, especially for its enormous deposits of phosphates. In Madrid, Rabat and Nuakchott the people thought that a handful of nomads could not rebel. This was failure to take into account the character of the Saharans who, after all, were known for some time for their warlike qualities: "warriors, caravan raiders, a marauding and ferocious people." This was the opinion expressed in an official document of Moroccan emperor Sidi Mohamed back in the middle of the seven hundreds. These were people who recognized no other authority but that of God.

Today Land Rovers have replaced the dromedaries and the rare horses; POLISARIO's guerrillas, like their raiding guerrilla ancestors, appear from nowhere; they strike and withdraw.

The Western Sahara has become a trap for the Moroccan Army involved in a war of attrition. During the "Huari Boumediene" offensive, named in honor of the great protector and which was launched on 1 January, the Saharan Liberation Army carried out more than 100 military operations even in southern Morocco. Among the men of King Hassan the zone bounded by El Aaiun, Smara and Tan-Tan is referred to as the "death triangle."

POLISARIO has invented the "desert guerrila." "We have demonstrated to the world that we can fight and win in the desert." So stated Mohamed, a Saharan youth whom we met in the course of a visit in a refugee camp in Dakhla Province, this being a portion of the territory handed to Mauritania by Madrid most of which is now a liberated zone. "With our light armaments we have the upper hand over an army which is considered to be one of the best in

Africa and is equipped with heavy artillery, bombers and helicopters." The first rule of a guerrilla is to hide. There are no trees here and no great cities where it is easy to disappear. However, for the Saharan youth the desert is not as naked, as empty, and as flat as imagined by a stranger. All you need to know are its mountainous prominences, the water wells, the shelters and the sparse vegetation.

The Saharans have adapted their traditional virtues to the new exigencies. From time immemorial the tribes of this region have fought against each other and against the Berber tribes of the north. They have never laid down their arms against the European invaders. The POLISARIO Front deserves most of the credit for overcoming tribal division and for creating a national identity, thanks in part to the confining influence imposed by the drought and the threat of the enemy beyond them.

The basic material, namely the fighter, was already there and it was just a matter of organization. Every Saharan comes out of a military "academy" which is unique in the world. As a rule the recruit of a classic army has never touched a rifle and he does not have any idea of what combat is all about. For the Saharan the family rifle is a domestic thing with which he has lived since birth and which he began to use in his adolescent years. Thanks to the stories told to them by their elders during the long desert nights, they learn the battles of the past by heart.

These involve centuries of experience, of living history, and the entire country (unknown and frightful in the eyes of a foreigner) becomes an immense maneuvering ground and an enormous general headquarters map upon which the POLISARIO fighter learns his trade. Political mobilization has done the rest. The Saharan warrior knows that he is fighting for freedom and for the existence of his people. The only difference between modern soldiers and their ancestors is that the Land Rover and the Kalashnikov gun have replaced the dromedary and the saber. The Land Rover has become the true queen of the desert. Its speed and toughness, combined with the extraordinary ability of the drivers, are making this vehicle into a deadly instrument of surprise attack. They are kept uncovered so that the fire can be directed in all directions. The firepower is impressive: either 10 men armed with the Russian Kalashnikov light machinegun or the Belgian Pal type, or else eight men armed with a bazooka or a 105 mm. cannon.

An operation ordinarily carried out is the attack on convoys bringing fuel, provisions and arms to fixed posts. These assaults take place between dunes and depressions, using the same techniques of the American Indians who set ambushes for the pioneers' caravans. Convoys are attacked at about noon when the reflection of the blinding sunlight is the greatest and when the first signs of fatigue are felt. It is also the time which permits withdrawal at sunset. Usually groups of mechanics stay behind where the battle took place; these are the soldiers who patiently and expertly take apart a truck, an armored vehicle or Land Rover-- damaged or rendered useless--for the purpose of obtaining spare parts from them.

Officers of the Moroccan Royal Armed Forces admit with bitterness that the "stroll in the desert" promised to them 3 years ago by King Hassan has turned out to be an illusion. The first units had arrived full of confidence that they would be received as liberators, but the scornful refusal to do so on the part of the population and the flight to the refugee camps of Algeria plus the victorious attacks on the part of the POLISARIO soldiers, undermined the morale of Hassan's troops. Added to this is the lack of motivation; the Moroccan soldier who came here to fight for the sacred cause of the reunification of the fatherland is full of doubts. He is beginning to realize that he is risking his life to make it possible for King Hassan to save his face. The military situation has worsened ever since last summer after the fall of Ould Daddah's regime in Mauritania and the unilateral ceasefire decreed by POLISARIO with respect to the Mauritanians. Ever since then the desert attacks have been concentrated on the Moroccans. Once isolated, every base in the Western Sahaha becomes a target of the Saharans. The Moroccan Armed Forces Headquarters is recording hundreds of dead and wounded and great losses in war materiel--all of this not in confrontation with a handful of rebels but with a real army made up of warriors renewing those ancient legends.

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